

DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
DECEMBER 8, 2007

DSB BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Sharon Berry  
Lori Hunter  
James Johnson  
Nola McKinney  
Irma Nelson  
Dickie Walker

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Hill  
Ann Moore  
Sandy Rowland  
Ramona Sangalli

DSB BOARD MEMBERS ABSENT

Angyln Franquemont

EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT

Kara Aaron

DHS Representative: Steven Jones

Attorney General's Office Representative: None

Governor's Office Representative: None

DSB Staff Present: Katy Morris, Carolyn Holbrook, Coral Virden, Charlie Cain-Davis, Jim Pearson, Donna Walker, Mary Cabaniss, Kandy Cayce, Tanya VanHouten, Dorothy Brooks, Gloria Mance, Ginny McWilliams

**CALL TO ORDER.** Chairman Mrs. Nola McKinney called the meeting to order.

Mrs. McKinney welcomed three new board members: Mr. Dickie Walker, at Large representative; Mrs. Ann Moore, Ex-officio board member representing the Arkansas Association for Education and Rehabilitation of the Blind and Visually Impaired (AER); and Mr. Sandy Rowland, Ex-officio board member representing Arkansas Association of Blind Business Enterprise Managers.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA.** Motion was made by Mrs. Sharon Berry to amend the agenda to provide that Assistant Director Mrs. Katy Morris would present the Director's Report, and Chairman McKinney would report on the Executive Committee discussion of the procedures for appointing an Interim Director and recruiting for the Director position. Mrs. Berry moved that the agenda be approved with these two amendments. Mr. James Johnson seconded the motion. *Motion passed.*

**APPROVAL OF 09/08/07 MINUTES.** Motion was made by Mrs. Berry to approve the minutes. Mr. Walker seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

**INTRODUCTIONS.** All persons in attendance introduced themselves.

Chairman McKinney expressed her personal condolences and that of the DSB Board to the family, friends and associates of DSB Director, Mr. Jim Hudson. Mr. Hudson died unexpectedly November 24<sup>th</sup>. It is a tragic loss to those who knew him personally, to the DSB consumers, and to the whole community of consumers of and programs for providing services to persons with disabilities.

**APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM DIRECTOR.** In order to consider required actions for continued agency operations following the death of Mr. Hudson, Chairman McKinney convened the Executive Committee of the DSB Board. The Committee consists of the Chairman McKinney, Vice-Chairman Berry and Secretary Nelson. It was determined that DSB personnel procedures provide that, in the absence of the Director, the Assistant Director automatically serves in an acting capacity. Therefore agency operations could legally continue uninterrupted until the next regular board meeting. Following consultation with DHS Deputy Director Steven Jones, the executive committee voted to recommend to the full board that DSB Assistant Director Katy Morris be named Interim Director with the same salary and benefits previously accruing to Mr. Hudson. The proposed interim appointment would be effective until the Board selects a new Director. Mr. Jones indicated that Governor Beebe was in agreement with the interim appointment of Mrs. Morris. Mrs. Berry made a motion that Mrs. Katy Morris be named Interim Director of DSB with all the benefits of the director's position until such time as a new director is selected. Mr. James Johnson seconded the motion. ***Motion passed.***

Following discussion, it was agreed that the search for a new director will begin in three months, using the DHS recruitment process. In the DHS recruitment process, the board as a group will review the functional job description which describes the education, skills and abilities required for the position. The board will be able to prioritize the job requirements to suit its preferences.

**DSB DIRECTOR'S REPORT** – DSB Interim Director, Katy Morris, expressed her condolences to all in the loss of Mr. Hudson. She noted, particularly, her deep appreciation to the staff for the very cooperative and professional manner in which they have assisted her, and continued their duties and services to consumers. It is a tribute to the legacy of Mr. Hudson and he would be very proud.

FEDERAL ISSUES. On the federal level, state rehab agencies are operating under a second *continuing budget resolution* by Congress, and the Workforce Investment Act is still under extended consideration. Social Security Administration has announced an increase in the level of *Substantial Gainful Activity* (SGA) for persons on Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). A person who is blind may now earn \$1570 a month in 2008 without losing SSDI eligibility.

STATE ISSUES. At the state level, DSB has been moving forward to secure signatures from the state *Workforce Centers* on how the centers are going to serve DSB consumers and how DSB might assist the centers. RSA expects all rehab agencies to work in greater partnership with the Workforce Centers.

DIVISION ISSUES. The state Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has restarted the *Pay Plan Study* (put on hold during the 2005 legislative session) to try to bring state government into a more competitive position in attracting and retaining qualified staff. This time, OPM is reaching out to state program managers to involve them directly in writing the state job descriptions for program specific job functions. DSB will be submitting those job descriptions next Friday and then negotiate the pay levels at which OPM will equate the DSB jobs compared to private agencies, federal government and all the other entities that represent competition to us. This will be an on-going dialog between DSB, DHS Personnel, OPM and the Legislative Personnel Committee through the close of the 2009 session. *Immigration* continues to be a very big issue at the state level, especially within DHS. However, because state rehab agencies are prohibited from serving illegal immigrants, DSB is not directly affected.

*The annual DSB Statewide Staff Meeting* was held in Little Rock October 17-19, with several board members able to participate. The meeting was excellent and DSB received a great deal of positive feedback about the training and the speakers. But the recurring comment coming from staff in the weeks following Statewide Meeting was a simple thank you to Mr. Hudson for sharing, for the first time, his very personal reflections on the significant benefit he derived individually from the services provided by division staff members as he came through the rehabilitation process. He said that the expectations of Rehabilitation personnel caused him to rethink his expectations of himself, and totally reset his personal goals. These comments meant a great deal to DSB staff.

A *memorial table* is set up today with many of Mr. Hudson's awards and recognitions, as well as some personal memorabilia. Readers are available for persons with visual impairment. One of the pictures on the table goes all the way back to Mr. Hudson's days as a consumer at Arkansas Enterprises for the Blind. The display gives you a deeper understanding of the many facets of his professional and personal life.

Also on the table is the proclamation that Governor Beebe issued recognizing Mr. Hudson's life work on behalf of persons with disabilities, especially those who are blind and visually impaired. The proclamation was read by DHS Director John Selig at the close of Mr. Hudson's funeral. [Editor's note - The proclamation is attached as a formal part of the minutes].

The quarterly meeting of the Committee of ***Licensed Blind Vendors*** was held November 3, and was very successful. The Field Program also achieved success this year by exceeding its annual performance standard in ***Vocational Rehabilitation***. A record 347 consumers successfully completed their rehabilitation plans and secured appropriate employment, up from 344 last year. Due to the decreased staffing in the ***Older Blind*** program, DSB services were down from last year, rehabilitating 332 older individuals who are blind, compared to 340 in 2006. Additionally, DSB maintains a monthly waiting list in Older Blind which currently totals 116 individuals.

In an effort to improve ***DSB name recognition***, Mr. Hudson and I met with DHS Director of Communications, Mrs. Julie Munsell. We are looking at ways to distinguish DSB clearly in the minds of the consumers and their families, the legislature, and our sister state agencies. Often DSB is confused with School for the Blind and Lions World Services for the Blind.

One of the initiatives that DSB is pursuing is ***Disaster Preparedness***. DSB Chief Fiscal Officer Ms. Mary Cabaniss is working to prepare the division in the event that something happened to this building, or something catastrophic happened to a large segment of the state geographically, we would be better prepared to continue services to our consumers.

DSB is continuing its study with OPM to identify well-paid but high-turnover ***state jobs*** that might be performed by persons who are blind, following specific training. This would be similar to the IRS program at LWSB, where a curriculum is developed and jobs are targeted with a commitment to hire at the end of training.

DSB has received the final version of the federal review, containing virtually the same comments made by the RSA Team during the June Board meeting. Basically RSA told us that we definitely need to increase our ***Supported Employment*** efforts, coordination with other agencies and positive outcomes. Additionally, RSA reiterated that DSB needs to decrease the ***ratio of caseload staff*** to supervisors to increase the quality and frequency of supervisory visits to field offices. Further, the federal review report noted that DSB must step up documentation and follow through for ***Social Security Reimbursement***. RSA also emphasized our need to continue current efforts at improved coordination of ***Transition Services*** in conjunction with the Arkansas Interagency Transition Partnership, as well collaboration with the entire ***Aging Services*** network as a natural extension of the DSB Older Blind Program.

Yesterday, we had the unfortunate honor of saying goodbye at a reception for Reading Services Director **Mr. Randy Johnson**, who will be retiring December 31. Randy is the first and only Director the service has ever had and he will be sorely missed. He is actively recruiting a replacement for himself right now, and will be interviewing soon.

As a part of Departmental strategic planning, called “**Beliefs Based Performance Management**”, DHS has been conducting “high performance culture” workshops around the state. The training is rooted in the knowledge that you don’t get improvement within an organization if it is not a grassroots effort. The DHS Core values are basic to DSB: Compassion, Courage, Respect, Integrity and Trust. This is what DSB was built upon.

END OF DIRECTOR’S REPORT

**NATIONAL OLDER BLIND SURVEY RESULTS** - Mrs. Ginny McWilliams, Case Reviewer for DSB, gave a summary of the Independent Living Services for the Older Blind survey for FFY 2006. A total of 749 surveys were mailed to the Older Blind consumers in December 2006. The survey contained nine questions where consumers were asked to choose between strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. **The overall satisfaction rate was 95.1%.** [Editor’s note - A detailed report by each individual survey question is attached as a formal part of these minutes].

**USE OF DHS FORMS SYSTEM FOR EVALUATION OF DSB DIRECTOR –**

The issue under question is whether the DSB Board or DHS Deputy Director Steven Jones is responsible to evaluate the DSB Director. If the DSB Board is responsible to plan and conduct the evaluation, does the board want to utilize the format approved by OPM for DHS division directors, or develop its own and try and get OPM to accept it. The board chairman recommended that the board stick with the DHS format. Mrs. Sharon Berry made a motion that Mr. Steven Jones requests an Attorney General’s Opinion, to obtain clarification regarding whether the Board or Mr. Jones is responsible to evaluate the DSB Director. Ms. Irma Nelson seconded the motion. **Motion passed, unanimously.** The evaluation form and functional job description for the DSB Director will be mailed to all board members to review for comments prior to the next board meeting.

**BIENNIAL BUDGET PLANNING** – Mrs. Katy Morris outlined the proposed plan for the upcoming 2009-2011 biennial budget priorities, including requesting an additional supervisor, opening a field office in Southeast Arkansas, covering the resulting cost of the pay plan study, continuation of contracts to centers for independent living, such as Mainstream and SAILS, and equipment, such as additional state cars and computers.

Business & Technology Administrator, Mr. Jim Pearson, keeps good track of what equipment DSB has across the state, how old it is, how much it is breaking down, etc. In the review report, RSA emphasized that DSB should apply funds to improve direct service before we look to increasing purchased services. They noted that unless DSB has qualified direct-service staff in place and trained, it cannot responsibly manage indirect (purchased) services. We are requesting the board's approval of the concept of pursuing these budget priorities in the upcoming biennial budget. Mr. Dickie Walker made a motion to accept the budget concept. Ms. Lori Hunter seconded the motion. **Motion passed unanimously.**

**APPOINTMENT OF BOARD COMMITTEE FOR CONSUMER OF THE YEAR.**

The board chairman appointed Mr. Sandy Rowland, Ms. Irma Nelson and Ms. Lori Hunter to the 2008 Consumer of the Year committee. The committee will review the nominations and select the consumer of the year.

**DISABILITY RIGHTS REPORT (DRC)** – Mr. Eddie Miller expressed his appreciation for working with DSB Director, Mr. Jim Hudson, over the years. Mr. Hudson was very supportive of DRC, and Mr. Miller noted that he looks forward to working with whoever takes the position. Disability Rights Center has a program called "PASS" that works with people who are receiving SSI/SSDI, and are working or attempting to go back to work, or maybe having a problem in overpayment status. If consumers encounter these problems, counselors should contact Mr. Miller, who supervises the PASS program. He will discuss the problem with the consumer and the counselor jointly, and attempt to resolve the problem. The toll free number is 1-800-482-1174. Other DRC staff is busy investigating abuse, neglect and death cases all over the state of Arkansas. Also, DRC is submitting its annual reports to RSA explaining what each DRC program has accomplished this past year and Mr. Miller is reporting on services for the blind and what DRC did.

**ARKANSAS INDEPENDENT LIVING COUNCIL REPORT (AILC)** – No representative was present. A report was submitted with the board packet.

**CONSUMER INPUT** - Lions World Services for the Blind Director, Mrs. Ramona Sangalli, reported that the capital campaign for the new building is slowly moving along. A list of possible donors is being compiled and the foundation board is being drafted to possibly help with the fundraising process. Mrs. Nola McKinney reported that her Lioness Club made a donation separate from their usual donation just for the building fund and they will try to do it again if they get a good money raiser. Ms. Lori Hunter reported that six individuals with the National Federation of the Blind are gearing up to go to a Washington Seminar January 28, 2008 for lobbying. Some of the issues are the same as last year. Ms. Sandy Edwards reported the Arkansas Council of the Blind is gearing up for their state convention in April at the Otter Creek LaQuinta Inn. The national level issues are paper money, non-descriptive TV and quiet cars. Also, ACB is trying to increase its advocacy.

The ACB national convention will be held in Louisville, Kentucky, July 5 – 12, 2008. The NFB national convention will be held in Dallas, Texas June 29-July 5, 2008. Ms. Lori Hunter moved that Mrs. McKinney be authorized to represent DSB at the American Council of the Blind convention and Ms. Hunter be authorized to represent DSB at the National Federation of the Blind convention, each to be reimbursed for actual and reasonable expenses in accordance with state procedures, not to exceed \$1,300 each. Mrs. Sharon Berry seconded the motion. **Motion Passed.**

The board voted unanimously to schedule the next meeting Saturday, March 8, 2008, at the Department of Human Services, Donaghey Plaza South Building, First Floor, Conference Rooms A & B at 10:00 a.m.

The meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted,

Irma Nelson  
Secretary

Attachment (2)  
Governor's Proclamation  
National Older Blind Survey Results

**State of Arkansas**  
**Executive Department**  
**Proclamation**

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME — GREETINGS:

- WHEREAS: James (Jim) Charles Hudson, born on April 1, 1942, deeply loved by his family and many friends, died suddenly on November 24, 2007; and
- WHEREAS: After earning a bachelor's degree from Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Jim became the first blind student to graduate from the School of Social Work at the University of Arkansas where he received his master's degree; and
- WHEREAS: Jim was a devoted fighter for the rights of the blind and for all those with disabilities. He served tirelessly as director of the Governor's Office of Advocacy Services under former Governors Pryor and Clinton, advancing the civil rights and quality of life for so many; and
- WHEREAS: He pioneered the establishment of the Arkansas Disability Rights Center, a private nonprofit agency, and campaigned to unify consumer, civic, and professional groups in service to our citizens who are blind or severely visually impaired; and
- WHEREAS: From this collaborative effort emerged the Department of Human Services Division of Services for the Blind (DSB) of which Jim was executive director for 23 years, leading the agency to be recognized consistently among the best in the Nation in the field of rehabilitation. Jim served several terms as president of the National Federation of the Blind in Arkansas; and
- WHEREAS: Exemplifying the humility of a true humanitarian, Jim will long be remembered for his devotion to his family, his passion for music, and for the lasting contributions made under his leadership:
- NOW, THEREFORE, I, MIKE BEEBE, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, in tribute to the memory of Jim Hudson and as an expression of public sorrow, do hereby recognize the lifetime service of James Charles (Jim) Hudson, and join the citizens of Arkansas in expressing our deep appreciation for his faithful stewardship.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 27th day of November in the year of our Lord 2007.

Officially signed by Governor, Mike Beebe



ARKANSAS DIVISION OF SERVICES FOR THE BLIND  
Client Satisfaction Survey Results  
FFY 2006  
Independent Living Services for the Elderly Blind  
Consumers Polled 2007

**METHODOLOGY**

The 2006 Client Satisfaction Survey was mailed in various media via FREE MATTER FOR THE BLIND, to every DSB Independent Living Services for Elderly Blind client for Federal Fiscal Year 2006. Postage-free return addressed envelopes were provided. The questions with their responses follow the overall summary. The survey consisted of nine questions and consumers were asked to indicate their satisfaction by choosing between strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

**OVERALL SUMMARY**

Of the 749 surveys mailed, 46 or 6.14% were returned undeliverable. To date, 297 have been returned. The 297 surveys returned represent a 42.24% return rate for 2006.

**Overall, the satisfaction rate is 95.1%.**

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS**

**Question Number 1: Services were provided in a timely manner.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 12 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 285 responses, 157 or 55.1% strongly agreed, 113 or 39.7% agreed, 12 or 4.2% disagreed, and 3 or 1.0% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 94.7% for this question.**

**Question Number 2: My telephone calls were returned promptly.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 49 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 248 responses, 131 or 52.8% strongly agreed, 103 or 41.5% agreed, 12 or 4.9% disagreed, and 2 or 0.8% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 94.4% for this question.**

**Question Number 3: I was treated with courtesy and respect from all staff.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 13 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 284 responses, 195 or 68.7% strongly agreed, 86 or 30.2% agreed, 1 or .4% disagreed, and 2 or .7% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 98.9% for this question.**

**Question Number 4: I feel my teacher provided me with relevant information and services for my specific situation.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 34 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 263 responses, 155 or 58.9% strongly agreed, 98 or 37.3% agreed, 5 or 1.9 disagreed, and 5 or 1.9% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 96.2% for this question.**

**Question Number 5: My teacher was attentive, concerned, and interested in my well-being.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 39 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 258 responses, 153 or 59.3% strongly agreed, 97 or 37.6% agreed, 6 or 2.3% disagreed, and 2 or 0.8% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 96.9% for this question.**

**Question Number 6: I am satisfied with the amount of contact I had with my teacher.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 37 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 260 responses, 139 or 53.5% strongly agreed, 100 or 38.5% agreed, 17 or 6.5% disagreed, and 4 or 1.5% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 91.9% for this question.**

**Question Number 7: My teacher was familiar with technology and techniques used by blind and visually impaired people.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 42 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 255 responses, 154 or 60.4% strongly agreed, 94 or 36.9% agreed, 6 or 2.3% disagreed, and 1 or 0.4% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 97.3% for this question.**

**Question Number 8: Overall, I am satisfied with how the services helped me achieve my goals for independent living.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 22 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 275 responses, 147 or 53.4% strongly agreed, 114 or 41.5% agreed, 11 or 4.0% disagreed, and 3 or 1.1% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 94.9% for this question.**

**Question Number 9: I feel that my present vision related needs have been met.**

Response: Of the 297 surveys received, 27 did not indicate a choice. Of the remaining 270 responses, 117 or 43.3% strongly agreed, 129 or 47.8% agreed, 18 or 6.7% disagreed, and 6 or 2.2% strongly disagreed. **This is an overall satisfaction rate of 91.1% for this question.**

Comments ranged from, “God bless you for all you do, to “I have NEVER had any services.”